Training 10-1: Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) WPCP Application Process



Welcome to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's training module on the Private School Choice Programs. We will refer to the Private School Choice Programs as "Choice" or "Choice program" throughout this training. The Choice program is governed by Wis. Stat. § § 119.23 and 118.60, as well as Wis. Admin. Codes ch. PI 35 and 48. Provisions of this training module are subject to statutory and rule changes.

This training module will discuss the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program's (WPCP) Application Process.

This training is only for schools that will participate in the WPCP and is not required or applicable to schools who participate in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) or the Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP).

This presentation will begin with an overview of the WPCP application timeline followed by an overview of the WPCP random selection and parent voucher notification process. The presentation will then review the Intent to Attend requirements for WPCP schools.

Let's begin with the WPCP Application Timeline. There are 3 parts to the WPCP Application Timeline:

- Part 1: 1st weekday in February through the 3rd Thursday in April The WPCP Open Application Period
- Part 2: 3rd Friday in April through the 1st weekday in May
- Part 3: After the 1st weekday in May

WPCP Application Timeline

- 1st weekday in February 3rd Thursday in April The WPCP Open Application Period:
 - Parents must apply every year via the Online Parent Application.
 - Parents complete the Online Parent Application and select all the schools they wish to apply to.
 - The completed application will be submitted to each school.
 - Parents must take, to each school, the supporting residency documentation and income documentation, if applicable.
 - All Department of Revenue verifications should be completed during this time.
 - Schools should complete the verification of student applications in the Online Application System (OAS).
 - Schools must retain all documentation received from parents.
 - Schools must provide the Disclosure of Information packet to each Choice student or parent that applies to attend the school.

WPCP Application Timeline Part 1: 1st weekday in February through the 3rd Thursday in April - The WPCP Open Application Period

There is one open application period for the WPCP from the 1st weekday in February through the 3rd Thursday in April. Parents must complete and submit an application <u>each</u> <u>year</u> for their student in the Online Parent Application during this timeframe. After a parent completes and submits the application in the Online Parent Application, the parent will receive a confirmation email listing the documentation the parent must provide to the school(s). The parent must then take the supporting residency documentation and income documentation, if applicable, for each student to the school(s) he/she applied to by the 3rd Thursday in April. Parents may update their school(s) and school preference(s) and resubmit the application in the Online Parent Application during the WPCP open application period.

WPCP schools should complete Department of Revenue (DOR) verifications prior to the 3rd Thursday in April. For parents where DOR does not find records, these parents may change the income determination method in the Online Parent Application from the DOR method to the DPI method through the 3rd Thursday in April. The income determination method cannot be changed after the 3rd Thursday in April. If a school runs a DOR records check for an application after the 3rd Thursday in April and the DOR does not find records for the parent, the application is ineligible. For applications where the student is determined to be Ineligible per DOR where the parent indicates to the school that the DOR Income Determination is incorrect, the school should see the "Applications Determined Ineligible by DOR" section of the Income Documentation Bulletin for

2

information on how to proceed. Students who are determined Ineligible per DOR may not switch to the DPI Income Determination method.

Schools should complete the verification of the student applications during the WPCP open application period in the Online Application System (OAS). Schools must retain all documentation received from parents in the student files for the auditor review. The DPI recommends completing application verifications prior to the 3rd Thursday in April to allow parents time to make any needed changes to their application in the Online Parent Application or to provide additional supporting documentation prior to the 3rd Thursday in April. See the "School Verification of Application" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information.

All schools must provide to each Choice student or parent that applies to attend the school the information listed in the Disclosure of Information template. Schools must also provide the applicant with a copy of the certificate issued under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, if issued to the school. Additional information on the Disclosure of Information requirements can be found here:

School Submitted Reports and Forms. School Submitted Reports and Forms. Please also see the "Information Schools Provide to Applicants" section of the Application Process Bulletin for information on this requirement.

WPCP Application Timeline (cont.)

- •3rd Friday in April 1st weekday in May:
 - Schools complete the verification process for all applications in the Online Application System (OAS) by the 1st weekday in May.
 - •WPCP schools must complete the Final WPCP Seats Report in OAS by the 1st weekday in May..
 - •WPCP schools must send letters of non-acceptance to students determined ineligible after the last day of the WPCP open application period but no later than the 1st weekday in June.

WPCP Application Timeline Part 2: 3rd Friday in April through the 1st weekday in May

Schools must complete the verification of all applications by the 1st weekday in May in OAS.

If the school did not complete the DOR records check prior to the 3rd Thursday in April, the school may complete the records check. However, if the DOR returns a message that they do not have records, the application must be determined ineligible. If the DOR has records, the school may move forward with completing the verification process using DOR. For applications where the student is determined to be Ineligible per DOR where the parent indicates to the school that the DOR Income Determination is incorrect, the school should see the "Applications Determined Ineligible by DOR" section of the Income Documentation Bulletin for information on how to proceed. Students who are determined Ineligible per DOR may not switch to the DPI Income Determination method.

WPCP schools may view the number of seats available by grade level on the Available WPCP Seats report in OAS. WPCP schools will be given an option to increase (not decrease) the number of seats in a grade and will enter this information on the Final WPCP Seats report in OAS which is due by the 1st weekday in May. Schools should take into account any returning WPCP students. If the school indicates fewer seats available in a grade than the number of returning WPCP students when completing the WPCP Final Seats report in OAS, some returning students will not receive a seat and will be placed on the WPCP waiting list. See the "WPCP Seat Changes" part of the "Setting School Seats" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information on revising school

seats and tips for completing the Final WPCP Seats report in OAS.

WPCP schools with applications that have been determined ineligible through the application verification process should notify the parent of each WPCP applicant via mail or email that their application is ineligible and will not be included in the random drawing after the last day of the WPCP open application period but no later than the first weekday in June. Any application that does not have an application status of "verified" in OAS by the 1st weekday in May is ineligible. See the "School Notification of Acceptance or Non-Acceptance to Applicants" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information.

WPCP Application Timeline (cont.)

- After the 1st weekday in May:
 - The DPI will conduct the random selection to determine which students will participate in the WPCP in the summer.
 - The DPI will send notifications to parents in the random selection. <u>WPCP schools should</u> not send any notifications of acceptance or non-acceptance to parents that were determined eligible by the 1st weekday in May unless instructed by the DPI to do so.
 - WPCP schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move. There are two types of moves:
 - WPCP Student Moves and Wishes to Transfer to another WPCP School
 - WPCP Student Moves to Milwaukee or Racine Unified School District and Stays at Same School
 - Parents may make a school preference change request for their student, under certain conditions, to a school.

WPCP Application Timeline Part 3: After the 1st weekday in May

The DPI will conduct the WPCP random selection to determine which students will participate in the WPCP in the summer.

WPCP schools should not send any notifications of acceptance or non-acceptance to parents that were determined eligible by the 1st weekday in May unless instructed by the DPI to do so. See the "School Notification of Acceptance or Non-Acceptance to Applicants" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information.

Schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move and wish to transfer to another WPCP school between the 1st weekday in August and the 3rd Friday in August at privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov. The DPI will review each request to determine if it may be approved. See the "WPCP Random Selection – Parent Wishes to Transfer WPCP Voucher to a Different WPCP School" and the "WPCP Random Selection – Student Moves Process" sections of the Application Process Bulletin and the "WPCP ADDRESS CHANGES" section of the Residency Documentation Bulletin for additional information.

Schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move to the city of Milwaukee or Racine Unified School District that will attend the same school by the 3rd Friday in August at privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov. After that date, schools update the student address information on the September Count Report. For school's that participate in the MPCP and/or RPCP, the DPI will transfer the WPCP applications to the applicable program in OAS. If the school does not participate in that program, the application will be determined ineligible. See the "WPCP Random Selection – Student Moves Process" section of the Application Process Bulletin and the "WPCP ADDRESS CHANGES" section of the Residency Documentation Bulletin for additional information.

If a parent wants to change their school preference to a different school to which they also applied after the DPI has notified parents of the WPCP students chosen in the random drawing and students on the WPCP waiting list via email, the parent should contact the school to which they want to change their school preference, as soon as possible and also prior to the 3rd Friday in September. See the "WPCP Random Selection – School Preference Change Process" section of the Application Process Bulletin for the process, requirements, and timing to make a request to the DPI. The DPI will review the request to determine whether or not it may be approved.

Reminder: The parent should accept the voucher offered at the school the student was originally selected in the WPCP random selection to ensure the student's participation in the Choice program and then make the school preference change/voucher transfer request. If the parent does not confirm acceptance of the voucher to the school the student was originally selected by the deadline in the voucher notification email, the school preference change/voucher transfer may not be approved. The preference change/voucher transfer may not be approved if the student resides in a school district affected by a school district membership cap and/or the school to which the student wants to make a preference change/voucher transfer does not have space available in the applicable grade for the student.

WPCP Application Timeline (cont.)

Summary of Key Points for WPCP Schools

- Parents must apply every year via the Online Parent Application.
- The 3rd Thursday in April is the last day parents can complete and submit applications in the Online Parent Application and the last day parents may provide the supporting residency and income documentation, if applicable, to the school.
- 3. WPCP schools should complete all DOR verifications prior to the 3rd Thursday in April.
- 4. Schools must provide the Disclosure of Information packet to each Choice student or parent that applies to attend the school.
- 5. WPCP schools must complete the verification of all applications by the 1st weekday in May.
- 6. WPCP schools must complete the Final WPCP Seats Report in OAS by the 1st weekday in May.
- WPCP schools send letters of non-acceptance to students determined ineligible after the last day of the WPCP open application period but no later than the 1st weekday in June.
- 8. WPCP schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move.
 - Schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move and wish to transfer to another WPCP school between the 1st weekday in August and the 3rd
 Friday in August
 - WPCP schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move to city of Milwaukee or Racine Unified School District that will attend the same school
 by the 3rd Friday in August. After this date, schools update the address on the September Count Report.

5

WPCP Application Timeline - Summary of Key Points for WPCP Schools

- 1. Parents must apply every year via the Online Parent Application for their student(s).
- 2. The last day for parents to complete and submit applications in the Online Parent Application is the 3rd Thursday in April. Parents must also provide the supporting residency and income documentation, if applicable, to the school by the 3rd Thursday in April.
- 3. WPCP schools should complete all DOR verifications prior to the 3rd Thursday in April and allow time for parents to change to the DPI method if applicable in the Online Parent Application.
- 4. Schools must provide the Disclosure of Information packet to each Choice student or parent that applies to attend the school.
- 5. WPCP schools must complete the verification of all applications by the 1st weekday in May. The DPI recommends completing application verifications prior to the 3rd Thursday in April to allow parents time to make any needed changes to their application in the Online Parent Application or to provide additional supporting documentation prior to the 3rd Thursday in April.
- WPCP schools must complete the Final WPCP Seats Report in OAS by the 1st weekday in May.
- 7. WPCP schools send letters of non-acceptance to students determined ineligible after the last day of the WPCP open application period but no later than the 1st weekday in June.
- 8. WPCP schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move.
 - Schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move and wish to transfer to another WPCP school between the 1st weekday in August and the 3rd Friday in August.
 - WPCP schools notify the DPI of WPCP students that move to city of Milwaukee or Racine Unified School
 District that will attend the same school by the 3rd Friday in August. After this date, schools update the
 address on the September Count Report.

WPCP Random Selection Overview

- •The DPI will conduct the random selection to determine which students will receive a voucher for the WPCP.
- •Choice school administrators and designees should be sure to check their email and the Intent to Attend page regularly as this process will likely run several times.
- •The Application Process Bulletin has detailed information on the WPCP Random Selection.

Next, the presentation will provide an overview of the WPCP random selection.

The DPI will conduct the WPCP random selection to determine which students will participate in the WPCP. The DPI will continue to conduct the random selection up to the 2^{nd} Friday in January.

Choice school administrators and designees should check their email regularly as the DPI will use email to communicate with schools regarding students that have been drawn in the WPCP random selection. Schools should also regularly check the Intent to Attend page in OAS to see the students selected.

Please see the Application Process Bulletin, available on the <u>Choice Programs: School</u>
<u>Application Processing</u> webpage, for detailed information on the WPCP Random Selection.

DPI Notifications

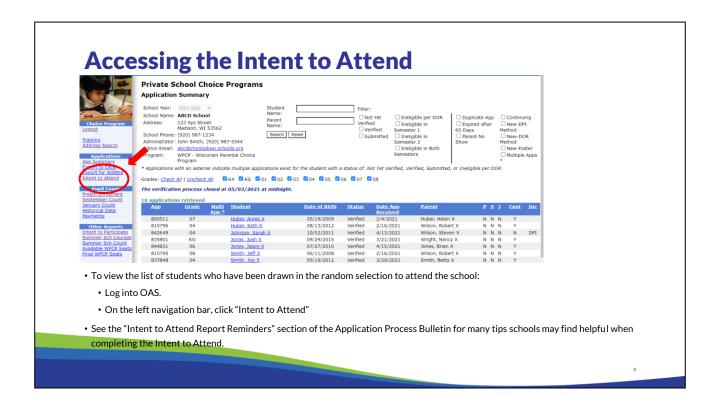
- DPI will send notifications via email to the:
 - Parents of the students selected or on the waiting list.
 - Schools when the random selection is complete.
- Parents of students who are drawn in the random selection will typically have 5 business days to contact the school at which they receive a seat to confirm that they will accept the voucher and attend the school.
- Parents do not have to receive the email in order to accept or decline the voucher and for the school to enter a response on the Intent to Attend report in OAS.

The DPI will email all parents of eligible applicants to inform them if their student was drawn in the random selection or is on the waiting list. The email will be sent to the email address the parent used in the Online Parent Application. For a student that is drawn in the random selection, the email will tell the parent to contact the school by a specified date to confirm his/her acceptance and indicate whether or not his/her child will attend the school. The specified date is typically five business days from when the random selection notice was sent. The email will also inform the parent that if he/she fails to confirm his/her acceptance by 4 pm on the specified date, the seat will be offered to the next student drawn in the random selection.

If additional seats become available due to students that decline the voucher or later withdraw from their school, the DPI will fill the available slots from the waiting list and notify parents via email.

See the "School Notification of Acceptance or Non-Acceptance to Applicants" section, the "WPCP Random Selection – DPI Notifies Parents of Students Chosen" section, and the "WPCP Random Selection – DPI Notifies Parents of Students on WPCP Waiting List" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information.

Reminder: Parents do not have to receive the email in order to accept or decline the voucher and for the school to enter a response on the Intent to Attend report in OAS. Parents may need to check their junk/spam folder(s) for the email.

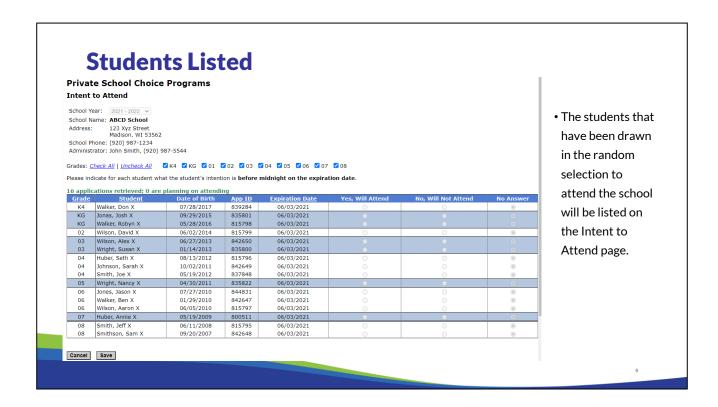


The last part of this presentation covers the Intent to Attend requirements for WPCP schools.

The Intent to Attend is the report schools use to enter the response from the parent saying whether or not his/her student will attend the school.

The Intent to Attend is completed by the school in OAS. To access the Intent to Attend in OAS, the school will log into OAS and click "Intent to Attend" located on the left menu bar.

See the "Intent to Attend Report Reminders" section of the Application Process Bulletin, available on the <u>Choice Programs: School Application Processing</u> webpage, for many tips schools may find helpful when completing the Intent to Attend.



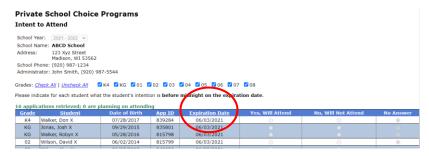
The Intent to Attend has a list of the students that have been drawn in the WPCP random selection to attend the school.

The following are some tips for locating students on the Intent to Attend report:

- 1. Schools can sort the report by student name by clicking on the "Student" column.
- 2. Schools can filter the report by specific grade(s) by clicking on the grade boxes.
- 3. Schools can sort the report by grade by clicking on the "Grade" column.

Columns on the report with headings that are underlined can be sorted by clicking on the heading name.

Expiration Date



- The "Expiration Date" indicates the date by which parents must confirm that they will attend the school.
- Parents have until 4pm on the expiration date to contact the school.
- Schools have until midnight on the expiration date to enter parents' responses.

10

As discussed earlier in this presentation, parents of students drawn in the WPCP random selection will receive an email instructing them to contact the school by a specified date. This date is the expiration date in the Intent to Attend in OAS. Parents have until 4 pm on the expiration date to contact the school.

Schools can sort the Intent to Attend by the "Expiration Date" column to see the most recent dates.

Let's review the timing of the Intent to Attend process and how this relates to the expiration date.

- 1. The DPI notifies parents by email that their student has been drawn in the random selection and that they must confirm acceptance to the school by <u>4 pm</u> on a *specified expiration date*.
- Schools should be in contact with WPCP families, prior to the *specified expiration*date, if the parents have not responded to let the school know if their student
 will attend the school.
- 3. <u>Schools</u> have until <u>midnight</u> on the *specified expiration date* to enter the parent response in the Intent to Attend report.

If the response is not entered by the school by <u>midnight</u> on the *specified expiration date*, the seat will be offered, if possible, to the next student on the WPCP waiting list which is not necessarily a student that applied to that school.

Updating Parent Responses Private School Choice Programs Intent to Attend School Name: ABCD School ddress: 123 Xyz Street Madison, WI 53562 chool Phone: (920) 987-1234 dministrator: John Smith, (920) 987-5544 Address: lease indicate for each student what the student's intention is before midnight on the expiration date Walker, Don X Jonas, Josh X Walker, Robyn X 815798 06/03/2021 Wilson, David) Wilson, Alex X 06/03/2021 842650 Huber, Seth X Johnson, Sarah X 08/13/2012 10/02/2011 06/03/2021 06/03/2021 842649 835822 Cancel Save

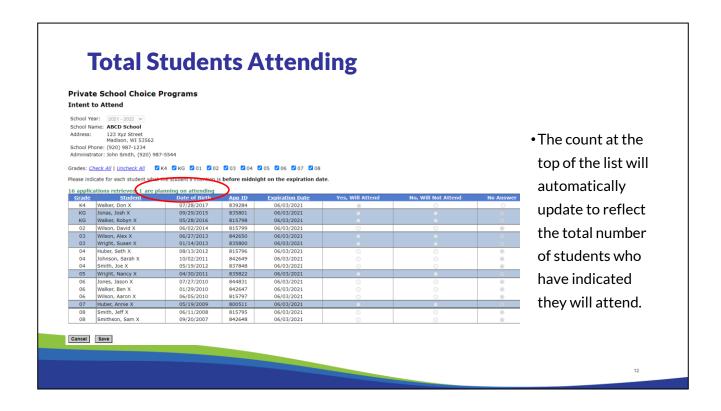
- The default setting for all students is "No Answer".
- After receiving confirmation from parents, the school must indicate "Yes, Will Attend" or "No, Will Not Attend" for each student.
- After entering a parent's response, click "Save".
- Schools do not have to enter the responses for all students at the same time.

When a Choice school receives confirmation of acceptance or denial from a parent, the school will use the OAS to indicate the parent's response by completing the Intent to Attend. Schools do not have to enter the responses for all students at the same time. **Reminder**: Parents do not have to receive the email in order to accept or decline the voucher and for the school to enter a response on the Intent to Attend report in OAS. Parents may need to check their junk/spam folder(s) for the email.

The default response for students on the Intent to Attend is "No Answer". The school will click on the button under the "Yes, Will Attend" column if the parent confirms their student will attend the school. The school will click on the button under the "No, Will Not Attend" column if the parent informs the school the student will not attend the school.

The school must click "Save" after entering a parent's response.

Please remember that if the response is not entered by the school by <u>midnight</u> on the expiration date, the seat will be offered, if possible, to the next student on the WPCP waiting list which is not necessarily a student that applied to that school. Schools <u>cannot</u> enter a response for a student after midnight on the expiration date.



The count at the top of the Intent to Attend report is automatically updated to reflect the total number of students whose parents indicated that their student will attend the school.

No Answers and Will Not Attend Responses

- •Parents who fail to contact the school to confirm their acceptance by 4pm on the expiration date will lose their seat.
- •After midnight on the expiration date, schools will be unable to update a student's intent.
- •All students for which there was "no answer" or whose parent indicated they "will not attend" will lose their voucher and the seat will be offered to the next student drawn in the WPCP random selection.

13

Important points to remember about No Answers and Will Not Attend responses:

- 1. Parents who fail to contact the school to confirm their acceptance by 4pm on the expiration date will lose their seat.
- 2. After midnight on the expiration date, schools will be unable to update a student's intent.
- 3. All students for which there was "no answer" or whose parent indicated they "will not attend" will lose their voucher and the seat will be offered to the next student drawn in the WPCP random selection.

WPCP schools should be in contact with families, if they have not responded to let the school know if their student will attend the school, prior to the specified expiration date.

If a parent fails to contact the school or does not accept (declines) the WPCP voucher by the deadline and wants to accept the voucher after the deadline, see the "WPCP Random Selection – Parent Declines or Did Not Contact School/Accept WPCP Voucher by Deadline and Later Wants to Accept Voucher" section of the Application Process Bulletin for the process, requirements and timing to make a request to the DPI. The DPI will review the request to determine whether or not it may be approved.

Student Attendance

- Students who are drawn in the random selection may begin attending the school as a Choice student when they indicate their intent to attend.
- Remember, students must meet the 3rd Friday in September and/or 2nd Friday in January count requirements in order for a school to receive a voucher payment for them.
- See the "WPCP Random Selection Timing for When Student Begins Attending the School and Payments" section and the "Timing of Choice Payments" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information.

14

The students who have been selected to attend the school may start attending the school as a choice student when they indicate their intent to attend.

Students must meet the 3rd Friday in September and/or 2nd Friday in January count requirements in order for a school to receive a voucher payment for the student.

The DPI will continue to conduct the random selection up to the 2nd Friday in January. The school may not charge a student tuition once the student has accepted a choice seat.

See the "WPCP Random Selection – Timing for When Student Begins Attending the School and Payments" section and the "Timing of Choice Payments" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information.

There is no special flexibility needed for schools to count students on a membership report who are being served with virtual or blended instructional models. The student may be counted regardless of the specific setting in which they are receiving instruction. Please see Training 9-1: Payment Process, Pupil Count Report & Audit Overview and Training 9-3: 3rd Friday in September & 2nd Friday in January Count Reports for additional information.

WPCP Student Withdrawals

- WPCP schools must immediately notify the DPI if a parent informs the school that his/her student* will not attend the school.
 - •These are the students where the school responded "Yes, will attend" on the Intent to Attend report or students that are on the WPCP waiting list.
- If possible, the available seat will be filled with a student from the waiting list which is not necessarily a student that applied to that school.
- See the "WPCP Random Selection Student Withdrawals" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information.

15

Schools must notify the DPI at <u>privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov</u> with the information below when a student with an eligible application (i.e. application has status of Submitted or Verified in OAS), withdraws from the school or decides to no longer participate in the WPCP:

- 1. Student name.
- 2. Attach one of the following:
 - a. School form showing the student has withdrawn from the WPCP or will not be attending the school for the current school year. The form must include the student name and be signed by a parent on the WPCP application. Please note that a request for records does not meet this requirement.
 - b. A letter or email from a parent on the WPCP application sent to the school which includes the parent(s) name, the student name and the school name stating the student has withdrawn from the WPCP or will not attend the school for the current school year. A letter must be signed by a parent on the WPCP application, and an email must be from a parent on the WPCP application and include the email heading information (i.e. To line, From Line, Date, Subject).

The DPI will continue to conduct the random selection up to the 2nd Friday in January. Schools should check their email regularly as the DPI will use email to communicate with schools regarding students that have been drawn in the random selection. If possible, the available seats will be filled with students from the waiting list. Please note that a seat declined at a school is offered to the next student on the waiting list, which is not necessarily a student that applied to that school.

See the "WPCP Random Selection – Student Withdrawals" section of the Application Process Bulletin for additional information.

Questions

Website: https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs

Email: privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov

Phone: 1-888-245-2732 ext. 3



16

If you have any questions about the information discussed in this training, please see the Private School Choice Programs homepage. The left menu bar of the Private School Choice Programs homepage has resources for both schools and parents.

Choice schools may also contact the Choice team at <u>privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov</u>, or call the toll-free number at 1-888-245-2732, extension 3 with questions.